



## **Witch Hunt** by **LittlexNightingale**

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**Summary:** Patrick's idea of a game turns a warm day at the Quarry into hell for Evelyn Mathews as Henry is led to believe that she is cheating on him with Vic.

## Witch Hunt

The afternoon air was humid; too damn hot to be packed like sardines in a metal death trap on the side of the road. Evelyn fanned herself with a fashion catalog – Annie offered it to her after she received it in the mail, hoping the thrifty teen would use it to update her wardrobe; she laughed, but promised her guardian that she'd take a look. The pages felt like weights in her hand. She was crammed shoulder to shoulder between Patrick and Victor as the guys sat and smoked near the Kissing Bridge. Her boyfriend Henry messed with the radio, turning the stations between every song; he was bored as far as Evelyn could tell. She leaned her head back against the seat and sighed in annoyance. Her bare legs were sticking to the leather, sounding a little like tape being pulled as she crossed one over the other on the armrest.

"For fucks sake, Pat. Can ya get off me?" Evelyn pushed his shoulder, trying to wiggle out from under him. She groaned as Patrick tossed his arm over the back of the seat and pulled her sweaty body against his own.

"Thought you liked me on you?" His lips hooked into a shameless grin; fingers digging into the soft skin at her thigh. "I'll keep yer secret in safe hands."

Evelyn rolled her eyes and scoffed. "I'm totally not in the mood for your teasing. Now let go." She shook her leg, trying to move his hand without touching him. To her relief he removed it. Henry shot her a look over his shoulder – to her horror – before resting his arm on her leg and returning to the conversation Belch and he were having. Evelyn huffed at her bangs and elbowed Patrick in the side.

The bored teen chuckled; her reactions were interesting. He faced Henry, meeting his irritated gaze. The blonde gave him a look of warning and curled up his nose, breaking the contact between them. A wide grin split Patrick's face. He knew the impetuous leader was possessive; Red was 1 of not many who essentially liked Henry and robbing her away him brought out a change that was unnatural of his behavior. Anyone who so much as looked unrequitedly at Henry's pet ended up broken – take Richie Tozier for instance. Patrick chuckled

to himself as he remembered holding fuckface down while Henry broke his glasses. He wondered to what extreme the blonde would go if someone from the gang were to come on to her – *I bet it would be fun to watch*. It'd be like a game Patrick couldn't lose. But, he'd need a guinea pig to test it.

"Victor," arose Evelyn's soft voice. She didn't notice Patrick cut his eyes to her. "Care if I bum a Red from you? I'll ask Greta to sneak ya a pack from her daddy. Promise her some gossip and she'll do just about anything ya ask."

Vic nearly choked, rasping as the smoke from his cigarette irritated his lungs. He glared at her, but traded it for a look of curiosity. "No shit? Didn't realize she was so easy to bargain with. Chick logic confuses me." He offered Evelyn a Marlboro and lit it as she leaned the tip into the flame of his zippo.

"We keep one another up on the 101 scoop, but there's usually a favor involved if either of us know somethin' before the other. It's foolish, but helps if ya want things done." The red head took a drag and exhaled it through her nose. She chuckled as she remembered Johnny Olson – the school heartthrob – admit he'd like to go down on Greta. She planned to tell her, but before she didn't know what to ask for. "She owes me in any case."

"Speakin' of her," Vic mentioned. "You goin' to her party at the community pool? Heard her daddy rented it for the day."

Evelyn snorted; wisps of smoke coming from her mouth. "Wasn't invited. Besides, I'm house setting for Annie and Frank this weekend as they go to Vermont to pick up Julia. You goin' with Peter?"

"He wants me to; Marcia not so much. Belch and I will probably go for a little while though." Vic opted not to mention Sarah Harding – a pretty girl from his English class – wanting him to go. He was eager to see her in a bathing suit and maybe he'd even get a date out of her. Evelyn knew her; Vic considered asking her to put in a good word for him. "Shame you can't go. I could use a wingman."

"Ya got Belch; he's sweet on the ladies." Evelyn nudged the blonde with her elbow and leaned over his lap to flick her ashes out the open

window. The sun was beaming down on her, making her sulk. She flopped back onto the seat with a groan and shoved the butt of her cigarette back into her mouth. "And Pat, I reckon."

Patrick heard her; he was listening. "Count me out. Think it'll be boring." *Unless someone drowns.* He would enjoy that; a bloated corpse floating on top of the water like a log. A shameless grin curled his lips. How long would it take for a person to decompose in a community pool? He grunted as Red nudged his side, hitting him directly in the ribs.

"What you thinkin' about, Pat?" Evelyn took a drag of her cigarette and blew the smoke into his face.

"Things you couldn't imagine," the bored teen muttered. He breathed in the haze of smoke and sighed in bliss. It really was hot out. Sweat beaded across his forehead and neck. "I'm bored is all."

*No shit.* Evelyn pouted her lips, feeling the moisture slide down the valley of her breasts. She shivered in disgust. "Ya think we should hit the Quarry? Least we can cool off, maybe grab some beers; cure that boredom."

"Sounds better than sittin' here roasting my ass off," Vic agreed. He saw Patrick bob his head, running his fingers through his greasy hair. "Might want to check with Hank though."

Evelyn agreed with a sigh and adjusted herself, carefully pulling her legs from the rest. Henry moved his arm, but he didn't react; his attention was again on the radio and its few set stations. The red head leaned forward and pulled herself between the 2 seats. She curled her fingers in the cotton fabric of her boyfriend's red cut off, feeling the moisture that had accumulated over the time they'd been sitting idly and gently tugged at the sleeve. Her voice was low as she called to him, but seeing as Henry didn't respond she tried again; only louder. "Baby, you hear me? I wanted to ask you a question."

"Stop pullin' on me, ya needy whore. It's too fuckin' hot." Henry shot her a brief look of irritation and swatted her arm away.

Evelyn grunted in annoyance. "I'm not trying to jump your bones. I

just want to know if we can go swimming; it's unbearable and the car doesn't have AC." She opted not to mention that Vic and Patrick were in agreement with her – Henry could be spiteful even to his friends.

"Do whatever you like," he murmured, leaning back in his seat. Henry felt uncomfortable stewing in his own sweat; it pissed him off. If going on a swim relieved him of the mess, he'd agree with his girl. His eyes shifted over to Belch; he was tickled by the exchange. Henry glared at him, dropping his lips into a frown. "You wanna wipe that look off yer face before I do?"

It was a rhetorical question, Belch knew. He cleared his throat and sat up straight in his seat. "You point and I'll drive. Peter has 2 cases of beer at his place; so long as he can come along, he should let us have em'."

"I don't fuckin' care. Just go before she starts whining." Henry put his large hand over her face and shoved her back, earning a yell of frustration. "Sit back."

Evelyn did as he asked, shooting a thumbs up to Vic. She smiled as he did the same, oblivious to the fact Patrick was watching them; grin on his otherwise apathetic face.

*Bingo*

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"Might as well give up, Fadden. Yer goin' ass over tits." Evelyn rooted for Vic and Belch as they partnered up against Marcia and Peter in a game of shoulder wars. She sat on the bank of the quarry and watched, holding her catalog against her chest; the number at the bottom of the page was circled in blue ink for later reference. Her long red hair was pulled up in a ponytail on the side of her head, damp from the lake water.

Marcia cussed loud enough for her to hear, resisting to be knocked over. She was exhausted and her arms were hurting; Vic had a tight grip on her shoulders. Her legs were held down by her thighs, but the more she wiggled the more she slipped. *I can't keep this up.* Marcia felt herself begin to fall.

An immense splash put an end to the match. Vic and Belch shouted in happiness as Evelyn applauded them. She had no qualm about them being able to win; Belch was the perfect build to be the *vehicle* – his momentum nearly collapsed Peter – and as an *attacker*, Vic carried more stamina than weak little Marcia. The blonde resurfaced with a sudden gasp, sputtering and coughing for air. She punched at her laughing boyfriend; he tossed her back on purpose.

"Need me to take care of 'im for ya?"

Peter Gordon was cautious around Evelyn; civil to her even. She'd make good on her threats and she had no problem with reminding him. There was a time he underestimated her; she was nothing more to him than one of Henry's toys. But, she proved her worth.

The first week of summer, before the weather got too warm, Peter held a house party in his backyard. Drinks were being passed around and in the heat of the night someone – Hockstetter he later heard – passed around the drugs. Peter was trippin' hard on LSD. He made a pass at Bower's current fuck buddy – not yet his sweetheart – asking that she give him a blowie. Henry wasn't fazed, not even as Peter freed his prick – halfcocked – and nearly slapped it against her face. He'd never forget the shameless leer she gave him as Henry whispered in her ear. Evelyn stood up, asked Peter if he'd like to fuck her – Marcia was out of town – and when he begged, she kneed him in the crotch. Henry agreed that seeing him piss himself was embarrassment enough; Peter learned that Evelyn was loyal to Henry and only him. He stayed at a distance from her and only spoke to the witty red head when prompted to.

"I'll pass, Evie. No reason to get mean." Peter visibly shook; his crotch hurt thinking about it.

Vic saw and laughed. "*Poor little baby*. Scared that she'll embarrass ya?" He already knew she had; the guys had front row seats. The blonde just liked to tease Peter. *Not wise to disrespect Hank, my friend*.

Boys. Marcia rolled her eyes and swam over to the bank. "Need a Budweiser, baby?" She heard Peter holler in reply and walked cautiously onto the slick rocks near the edge. Her eyes narrowed as she noticed the case was empty. "This is like ridiculous. We brought

another case. It can't be all gone."

"Sadler took it," Evelyn replied quietly. She had her eyes buried in the pages of the catalog. "I've got one I've been nursin' you can have." At her side was the can, unopened and lukewarm. She didn't mind giving it up; beer tasted like piss to her anyway.

Marcia took it, shivering as the cool breeze danced across her bare shoulders. She scoffed at the red head; Evelyn was wearing Henry's shirt as a coverup. "What are ya doin' over here anyway? Too good to hang with us?"

Evelyn hummed; her eyes strayed from the page. It was odd holding a conversation with the blonde. She didn't have much in common with her, other than being in the same gang. "I'm shoppin' for a new style. Been wantin' to buy an outfit that Henry will like, but I'm not havin' much luck." She wandered away from the marbled Cosby sweaters, thinking she'd look trashy in one. *Nothin' is good enough for 'im.*

Marcia snorted; no kidding. "If sweaty cut offs are yer style, then totally. But with him I'd say it's more what's under yer clothes that counts." She doubted that Bowers had any sense of fashion to begin with; none of the gang really did. *All except Vic maybe. He can match up camo with anything and make it look gnarly.* "Try askin' Vic to set ya up. He knows what Bowers likes. Unless ya like ironed on decals and thrash band tees – Patrick and Belch have no clue how grody those are."

"Works for em; shows ya who they are." Evelyn wasn't on the same page, but she did agree on asking Vic for help. "Mind tellin' him I need to speak with him?"

"Totally," the blonde chirped. She carefully slid into the murky water and swam over to Peter, tossing him the beer.

Evelyn watched her speak to Vic, motioning her fingers towards the red head in waiting. She saw him look her way and brush the drops of water off his face, then begin moving towards her. As he neared the bank, Evelyn chuckled and motioned him with her fingers. "Red rover, red rover, send Victor right over!"



"Such a loser," he laughed as he sat down beside her. "Well, you got me alone. Whatcha want to ask me?"

"I need some help, actually." Evelyn bit her lip and spread the catalog onto her knees. "You know Henry better than me. I wanted to buy him somethin' from this, but I don't know what he'd like."

Vic pouted his lips, narrowing his eyes as he read over the header title. "But this is a chick mag. I think Hank might get the wrong impression. Are ya callin' him a sissy?" He chuckled at the last part.

"I've always wanted a death wish," Evelyn joked. "But no. It's for me. I just want to wear somethin' Henry would like; I want to look good for him." She turned to the page she marked earlier and showed Vic the picture. "What do ya think? It's a jean skirt and a blouse, but I can match it with some high voltage colors for a more psychedelic look."

"It's alright, I reckon. Not somethin' Hank would care much about. You try just wearin' nothin' at all?"

Evelyn snorted in annoyance. *Marcia and now Vic*. "If I was eager for a deep dickin' maybe." She groaned and returned to browsing through the catalog.

*She's serious about pleasing Hank*, Vic guessed. He didn't know much about women's fashion, but he'd try. "Let me see it."

"You don't have to, if you don't want to." Evelyn was cautious about handing the book to him, but Vic pulled it from her fingers.

"Shut up." He rolled his eyes and chose to ignore the wide smile that brightened her face. She was too easy to please.

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Moose Sadler took another long draw from a marijuana cigarette, wheezing as the burn tickled his throat. He tipped back his head and stared at the bulging white clouds take shape into familiar beings; a furry rabbit. The face of a laughing clown with tufts of white cotton candy hair – it floated closer almost like it was coming for him. Moose shivered in fear; he was no doubt pretty baked. He dangled his thin legs over the lip of the quarry and kicked them in a way that

reminded him of the kids on the swing set at Derry park. A shadow loomed over him, blocking his view of the clown. Moose squinted his eyes, but a fat gob of something wet splattered across his acne covered forehead. *Wassat?* He dabbed the slick area with his fingers and brought them in front of his face. A viscid liquid glistened against his skin, cobwebbed across his fingertips. He realized what it was and gagged, nearly dropping the cigarette from the corner of his mouth.

"Likin' the spit bath lamebrain?" Patrick's voice mocked from above, chuckling as Moose furiously scrubbed at his skin with the end of his shirt. He shoved his knuckles against Sadler's head and gave him a rough noogie.

"Fuck yer grody," Moose hissed. "How bout ya chill out Hockstetter. Yer like a kid who got into his parent's medication ... or should."

Patrick sat on the rock ledge; his dead gaze set on the murky water 35 feet below. High on weed the lake was a black abyss. It reminded him of something out of an H. P. Lovecraft short – his 9th grade Literature teacher played Lovecraft on cassette every time there was an open period. He could imagine the surface breaching and a scaly, rancid tentacle reaching out to pull him to his death. Patrick considered leaping, saving the unnamed creature its effort. The jump wasn't high, not like he remembered; he could do it. But, taking a high dive into icy water wasn't something he was too excited about doing. A wearied sigh escaped him and he side glanced Bowers; he seemed to be just as thrilled. Since he discarded his shirt to Red – with a roll of his eyes – he went silent as the grave. Patrick knew it wasn't because of the marks on his back; his old man beat him, that was old news. There was something else; a frailty he could exploit. He leaned back, sharp rocks biting into the skin of his palms and watched for an opportunity to strike.

"Say Bowers ... that girlie down there – *the babe with the nice pair of tits* – ya soft on 'er? She yer lady?"

Henry crushed his empty beer can and tossed it – no regard for the earth – cleaning the remnants of liquid that spilled from the lip onto his jeans. His vacant eyes set on Moose; no ill will in his expression. He didn't much like the dunce or like being near him, but when

Moose Sadler did come around he brought good weed. Henry agreed to follow him to the leap on that concept alone. His girl was let down – *fuckin' needy*, he called her – but she robbed him of a kiss and his shirt, going with the guys to the bank. She looked sexy in that navy blue one-piece; her cute ass bounced as she trotted away. *My lady*. At the moment his lady was down on the bank with Vic wearing *his* red cut off and being fucking chummy with one of *his* friends. "She's mine – a damn good piece of ass too – but I ain't soft on 'er. She knows her place." *Sometimes she needs remindin' though*. "Got a mouth on 'er and doesn't mind flappin' it either."

"Yea she does," Patrick easily agreed. He saw it; the trigger. Henry visibly tensed up. The veins in his neck bulged – he was letting the jealousy get to him. *Just a nudge in the right direction*. "She's an attention seeker; been talkin' to Vic about goin' to Greta's party with 'im. Seemed real chummy together despite ya being in the front seat, Henry."

"Best not be joshin' me, fuckface. She told me she was house settin' this weekend." Henry took the bait. *She lyin' to me?*

Patrick squared his shoulders. "Just tellin' ya what I heard. Maybe not exact words, but pretty sure Vic wanted her to go. No tellin' what they're talkin' about down there."

"Whatcha gonna do, Bowers? She's yer lady."

Henry directed a glare at Moose Sadler. *Idiot needs to learn when to shut up*. He was trying to settle on an idea, a means to get them to confess. Fear. His girl wasn't scared of much; snakes maybe. She once refused him a good fucking because she said there was a milk snake in the rafters of the barn. But it wasn't fear. Eve was disgusted by them – their heads especially. Henry's lips rose briefly at the memory. He'd made a lewd comment about the snake in his pants; how she gave the head of his prick the most attention during a blowjob. Eve rolled her eyes at that, but she said nothing of it. She never argued with Henry. *Don't want a beatin' I reckon*. Except he'd never strike her; he wasn't his old man. She was sweet on him, even though she annoyed the hell out of him at times, touching him when he made it clear not to. Eve seemed to enjoy pushing his buttons; scratching her nails gently against his scalp while she sat in backseat on the Trans-

Am or blowing raspberries on his neck. Henry threatened to toss her off the side of the Kissing Bridge the first time she did it – he shut that shit down real quick. She was scared of heights, he remembered. It was reason she chose not to follow him to the leap. An idea came to him, but he was having trouble placing it. "The hell is that game called? The one with the couples on the cliff; some bullshit that builds trust. Fuck ... I can't remember." He racked his brain for the answer, but his mind was overwhelmed by other notions; his girl had him fucked up.

"Ya mean the one Marica and Peter bragged about doin' last summer? Ya know, where one of 'em hangs off the edge of the leap and the other keeps them from fallin' off." *That's the one*, Henry thought. Moose was still an idiot, however.

Patrick smirked, "Sure ya want to do that to Red? She's real scared of heights."

"Yea, I'm sure." Henry clutched his hands into a fist. He had never been so sure in his entire life, watching his lady swat teasingly at Vic with that mag she brought. He was on a witch hunt and nothing was going to change his mind. Henry jumped up with a grunt, trudging down the human made path toward the base of the quarry.

Once Bowers was out of ear shot, Moose directed a look of doubt to Patrick. "Yer joshin' 'im, right man? Best tell 'im before things get out of hand."

"I left out a few details," Patrick admitted. "Too late for that. Might as well sit back and enjoy the shit show. Ya gonna bogart that joint all day?"

Moose scoffed; *asshole*. "I think you've had enough." He may not be smart, but he knew a bad feeling when he had one.

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It was settled. Evelyn circled the outfit she wanted to buy, the style was anything but elegant. She closed the catalog and stretched her sore legs; moments like this reminded her of the long hours she and Julia Hall spent studying for exams together. She missed her. The entire break she'd been in Vermont – Eve had no friends other than

Henry and the boys. Course, she'd rather be at home dreaming about the gang from the *Outsiders* – Dally is her favorite – but she needed company. The old house was lonely without the family in it. Evelyn smiled, remembering that after her 3rd night alone, she began to do voices. She wasn't great, but she believed she could give Richie Tozier a run for his money.

"Somethin' funny? Ya got a shit eatin' grin on yer face." Vic's question made her laugh.

"Nah," she said quietly. "Inner humor. I was thinkin' about seein' Jules again. We got a lot to catch up on." Summer break was coming to an end. They'd be back in school by the beginning of August.

Vic gave her a look of doubt. "Yer not thinkin' about ditchin' us, are ya? Hank wouldn't be happy if ya stopped hangin' with us." *I reckon I'd miss her*, he thought. Belch too; he seemed to like her preference in music over Henry's button punching between songs. Vic watched her smile fade and her shoulders nod.

"I wouldn't be ditchin' you guys, but once the family comes home I won't have free reign over my life anymore." She forced a smile. She'd miss them. "Don't tell Henry, please. I want to be the one who does it." *He needs to see that I'm not abandoning him, not like his* – A hand grabbed her shoulder. The sudden appearance of her boyfriend made her jump. "Ya scared me, baby."

"The hell are ya so jumpy for? Got somethin' to hide?" Henry shot a look at Vic, but he receded his gaze. He knew something was up. Eve looked confused. She laid her palm on the back of his hand and smiled.

"Just shootin' the breeze. Wanna join us?" It sounded bad; a change of subject. Evelyn just wanted the outfit to be a secret. She had no idea of the lies that were rooted in his mind.

Henry raised a brow. *Fuckin' bitch. Gonna sit there and lie to me*. He remembered the reason for his pop in and drew his tongue over his lips. "We're about to play a game; yer partnerin' up with me. I want everyone to join." His glare was directed at Vic. "Get up and tell 'em. We're doin' it at the leap." Vic did as he'd asked.

Evelyn had a bad feeling about this. She didn't care much for the leap; one wrong move and she'd be sent hurling to the bottom of the quarry. She had never jumped from it before, but she heard stories of the injuries kids got for underestimating the height. There was even a rumor of one boy who cracked his head open on the rocks and drown. Evelyn wasn't sure about this idea, but she couldn't say no to Henry. She stood up, dusting off her legs – her skin was marred with tiny hollows from the many hours she'd been sitting – and smiled at her boyfriend. "Have fun up there?" She leaned forward to kiss him. But he stumbled back and she missed his mouth, planting a wet one on his chin. Evelyn angled her head and frowned. "Somethin' botherin' ya, baby?"

"Don't play that shit with me. Yer not being cute." Her act was getting old. Henry wasn't amused. He turned and began the short hike up the trail, expecting her to follow. She did, standing close enough to thread her finger through the belt loop on his jeans. Her warm breath danced across his bare skin and brought goose pimples to his arms. Eve smelled like him; his favorite gum and a mix of sweat from his shirt. He wanted her away from him, quickly. His thoughts were a cesspit of resentment and arousal; the longer he stayed near her, the more he wanted to use her body to outlet his anger. The leap came into sight and Henry sighed in relief. Eve clung to his jeans as he led her in front of Moose Sadler and a very satisfied Patrick Hockstetter. Henry rolled his eyes as his lady embraced him from behind, asking to know what they were playing. He ignored her. Minutes later, Vic and the others came up the trail. Belch gave him a confused look, but he ignored that too.

"What're we doin' up here, Bowers?" Marcia crossed her arms beneath her chest and narrowed her eyes. She wasn't happy about being pulled away from the lake. Peter shot her a cautious look as if to warn her not to anger Henry further. She scoffed, not really caring. "He's a total asshole. What's new? I just want to know what's so important that I have to drag my happy ass away from my time to relax." *Fuck caterin' to that jerk.*

"Shut yer trap and I'll tell ya," Henry snapped. He shot Marcia a glare as she flipped him off. His lady kneaded his muscles below his shoulder blades to calm him, but he was far from chill. "We're playin'

that game where ya hang from the ledge and someone has to keep ya from fallin' off." *The fuck was it called?* He couldn't remember. Eve stalled her fingers; Henry could sense her hesitation.

Peter snapped his fingers. "I know what yer talkin' about. Doesn't have a name, but Marcia and I have played it before. Works better with couples, but I guess that's why ya wanted us to pair up."

*Duh*, Henry thought. He rolled his eyes. "We'll take turns; see who out lasts the other. You two, then Eve and I. Fuck nut and Hockstetter, Vic and Belcher. Losers jump."

"I ain't teamin' up with Hockstetter. The fucker will let me go," Moose argued.

Patrick shrugged; *I would*. He put his hand over his heart. "That hurts. Are we not friends? I'd never do that to someone I considered a friend."

"Shut the fuck up," Henry snapped. His eyes focused on Peter; Marcia and he were arguing about something. He didn't really care. "Yer up, Gordon." Marcia sighed in aggravation but agreed to play nonetheless. Henry watched them prepare. An arm slipped around his torso.

Evelyn rested her head against Henry's shoulder. "I don't want to do this. Ya know I don't like heights."

He knew, but he also wasn't going to let her chicken out. Henry wanted the truth; not from Vic but from her. "Yer gonna play. I'm yer partner, so you've got no reason to be a pussy." *Unless ya got somethin' to hide*.

"Sure ... I got no choice." Evelyn released him as Marcia and Peter neared the ledge of the quarry, turning to face one another. Marcia had the lake to her back. Evelyn watched their footing – hers would be on the lip, at an slant. Peter clutched his girlfriend's wrists and kept her from sinking back, using his weight to pull her up. Marcia angled her head almost like she was trying to place it between her shoulders and hooted in excitement. And just like that it was over – Evelyn's turn. She hesitated; no way was she going to do that. But

Henry made up his mind. Her wrist burned as he yanked her ahead, guiding Evelyn to the ledge. All eyes were on her. She had a very bad feeling about this. Her magazine plonked to the ground the minute Henry pulled her in front of him.

His eyes were ashen and glazed. "Ya only get one chance so fess up. I won't ask you again. What the fuck are ya doing with Vic? Are ya fuckin' him too?" His fingers clasped around her upper arms.

*The fuck.* "Are ya joshin' me?" He wasn't; Evelyn could see it in his expression. "Where did ya hear that?"

"Not the answer I was lookin' for." Henry shoved her back. However, Evelyn lurched forward once she caught her footing. She grabbed his bicep and squeezed. Her body was shivering; she was scared.

"Stop it," she demanded feebly. Tears trickled down her rose-pink cheeks, but they went unnoticed by Henry as he continued to back her up an inch at a time. "Henry ... I mean it. This isn't funny. I don't want to go over the side." Evelyn buried her fingernails into his skin – her heart was pounding like a jackhammer. She shifted her heel back to stop him from progressing her further, but the earth ended. A sob of horror left her mouth.

Vic curled up his nose. The noises she made were horrifying. He wanted nothing more than to keep out of their argument, but the way Evie pled to Hank made his stomach churn. She was too afraid to even make coherent words. "Hank listen ... she's confused. Yer scarin' her man." Vic kept his distance, but took a step closer. A hand grabbed his arm. He glanced over his shoulder, seeing Belch shake his head. There was nothing he could do to stop Hank; Belch knew this and was trying to remind him.

"Fess up, Hockstetter. Yer joke has gotten out of hand." Moose hissed. He looked at Patrick who was having a field day; he was grinning from ear to ear. "Bower's lady isn't cheatin' is she?"

"The fuck are ya talkin' about?" Henry shot a dirty look at Moose. The dunce pointed at Hockstetter and Henry directed his narrowed glare at him. The smile on his face gave him away. "Got somethin' to say?"



*The jig is up.* Patrick lifted his hands. "Sike! Ya got me. Sorry Bowers, but I couldn't help it. Guess ya proved us wrong though; yer not soft on 'er." *The outcome was like I expected.* He felt the need to pat himself on the back. Red was in tears and Henry was confused. Patrick wasn't even fazed that Sadler ruined his fun – he'd be next, however.

Henry made a mistake; he listened to Patrick. But he saw them. There had to be some truth to his statement. He never expected his lady to be close to his friends, but the evidence was there. It was hard to digest. *The fuck were they doin' then?* He wanted answers and looked to Eve for them, but she was a sobbing mess. Her chin quivered as she clung to him, too afraid to let go, even to wipe away the eye makeup that ran down her face. Henry moved back and she followed. The second they were safely away from the ledge, his lady broke down. She collapsed to her knees and began to cry. Henry was mad; he didn't know what to do.

"Chill down princess. I was joshin' ya. No reason to make yerself ugly," Patrick stated. He grinned as said teen glared at him, deep hatred in her glossy eyes.

Evelyn gritted her teeth and rose to her feet, sprinting towards him. She coiled back her arm, clutched her hand into a fist, and punched Hockstetter in the face. Her tiny hand instantly throbbed with pain and she cussed. Patrick wasn't fazed one bit. He pissed her off. "Go to hell, ya greasy haired asshole." Evelyn stomped towards the Trans-Am, eager for a cigarette.

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2 Reds later and Evelyn was level. She rested her bare feet out the window as she hummed along with *Bon Jovi* on the radio; the traumatic events of earlier were fresh in her mind, but she was over it. Marcia came to see how she was doing – Evelyn got a few words in before she broke into conversation about the first argument she and Peter ever had – and even Belch sat with her, blaring Slayer's album *Reign in Blood* over the speakers. They left her alone after a while allowing her to cat nap, but she could still hear the gang nearby. It brought her comfort, yet she had no interest in leaving the car to join them. She rested her eyes up until a hand seized her foot; Evelyn flinched.

Henry let her foot go as she recoiled back into the car. Evelyn stretched and stared up at him with tired eyes; her liner was still ruined. He pulled open the door and leaned against it, tossing her mag into her lap. "This what you were keepin' from me? All them clothes ya have circled." He realized he'd answered his own question and grunted in annoyance.

"It was supposed to be a surprise ... one I asked Vic to help me out with. But can't hide nothin' from ya, so ta-da." Evelyn's voice was low. She cleared her throat and brought her legs into the seat.

"Ya mad at me?"

She shook her head, suppressing a yawn. "Nah, but sometimes ya take things to an extreme. Ya could have just asked me nice and I might have told ya." Evelyn curled up her nose in appall. "Patrick on the other hand can go suck a dick. He's forever on my shit list."

The blonde snorted, "I'm sure he has." Hockstetter wasn't his favorite person right not either. Even so, he was content with Eve not being mad at him. He wasn't going to apologize, so her forgiving him was a weight off his shoulders. He deserved a smoke for being so calm. "Pass me a Red." The pack was between her slender legs.

Evelyn did as he asked and snatched the zippo from the dash, climbing out of the car. She lit the tip and held in the smoke; her lips parted just enough to blow it into Henry's mouth as he did the same. She sighed in relief as his tongue met hers in a brief kiss. He tasted like *Bazooka* bubble gum, but she didn't mind. It was a flavor she'd come to like. She parted from him first and bounced back onto the passenger seat with a smile.

Henry rolled his eyes; his lady was a loser at times. "What can I do to make it up to ya? Don't ask for an apology, because ya ain't getting' one."

"Take me to the movies," she replied. Evelyn didn't have to really think about it, she was going to ask him anyway. "I want to see Maximum Overdrive the 25th. It has trucks in it – homicidal trucks." She was not like most girls; horror movies made her happy. Henry wanted to give her something that would keep her by him. He agreed

and Evelyn hooted in excitement. Her arms circled his waist.

*So fuckin' needy.*